A

SERMON

UPON

SWEARING.

BY

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LONDON:

Printed for B. Dod, Bookſeller to The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, at the *Bible* and *Key* in *Ave-Mary Lane*, near *Stationers-Hall.*

M DCC LV.

[Price 2*d.* or 12*s.* 6*d.* a Hundred.]

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EXODUS XX. 7.

Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain.

IT were good that you ſhould often read the 19th Chapter of *Exodus*, to ſee with what a dreadful Solemnity, the *Ten Commandments* were delivered by GOD to *Moſes* from Mount *Sinai*: ver. 16. *It came to paſs on the third Day in the Morning, that there were Thunders and*

Lightnings, and a thick Cloud upon the Mount, and the Voice of the Trumpet exceeding loud; ſo that all the People that was in the Camp trembled. And Moſes *brought forth the People out of the Camp, to meet with God, and they ſtood at the nether Part of the Mount. And Mount* Sinai *was altogether on a Smoak, becauſe the Lord deſcended upon it in Fire; and the Smoak thereof aſcended as the Smoak of a Furnace; and the whole Mount quaked greatly.* This was a Sight ſo terrible, that *Moſes* himſelf ſaid *(Heb.* xii. 21.) *I exceedingly fear and quake:* And for the People, They, when they ſaw the Fire, the Blackneſs, Darkneſs, and the Tempeſt, and heard the Thunder, Trumpet, and the Voice of GOD—*removed, and ſtood afar off, and ſaid to* Moſes, *Speak Thou with us, and we*

will

will hear; but let not God ſpeak with us, leſt we die. The Words which GOD ſpake, with this amazing, dreadful Preparation, were the *Ten Commandments.* Do you therefore think theſe Words were Words to be neglected, or forgotten? I have repeated a few of theſe Paſſages, that what I am going to ſay may make the deeper Impreſſion on your Minds.

THE Words of the Text, are part of that divine Law, that GOD himſelf uttered, with all thoſe awful Circumſtances before rehearſed: They make up, you know, the *Third Commandment.* Imagine therefore, that you heard the Voice of GOD, proclaiming loud in all your Ears, from the midſt of glorious and yet dreadful Fire and Smoak, Lightning, Thunder, and the Sound of Trumpets——*Thou ſhalt*

not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain — Imagine this, and ſee, if it is like to be ſo cheap a Thing, in the Concluſion, to profane the ſacred Name of GOD, by Oaths and Curſes, Blaſphemies and dreadful Execrations; as is the common Practice now-a-days to do, on every ſlight and frivolous Occaſion.

TO preſerve thoſe who are innocent, and to reclaim thoſe who are guilty, of this wicked Practice, I intend, in the firſt Place, to conſider the Words of the Text; and next, to make uſe of ſuch Reaſons and Arguments, as I think proper to diſſuade from it.

To take the Name of God in vain, is, in the firſt and literal Senſe, to uſe the

the ſacred Name of GOD lightly and commonly, to vain and idle Purpoſes, when it is needleſs and inſignificant; although we do not Swear by it, or call Him to witneſs to the Truth of what we ſay. To have that Name often in our Mouths, upon every little poor Occaſion, is to make it cheap and deſpicable, and ſhews we have not that awful Reſpect for Him in our Hearts, that we ſhould have: This is the beginning of Evil, and generally prepares the Way to Swearing: People do not fall to downright Oaths at firſt, but begin to wear off the Fear and Dread of Swearing, by the little Abuſes and Profanations of the Name of GOD; and then they venture by degrees to Swear by it. Theſe Miſchiefs come by Cuſtom and Habit; and therefore you muſt take good heed at firſt,

and ſtop your Children and young People, from uſing the Name of GOD familiarly and commonly, and upon all Occaſions; and that will beget a Reverence to it, and keep them from farther abuſing it. Remember to check and puniſh them, if you hear them call on GOD, either at their Play, or Work, or on any Occaſion, but what is ſerious and becoming; and by doing this conſtantly, you will ſtop up one of the commoneſt Inlets to this wicked Practice; you will make them careful of what they ſay; and do yourſelves a great deal of Good by it. Your doing your Duty to your Children and Servants in this Point, will put you in mind of your own Neglects and Failings; you will, in time, be aſhamed of reminding them of taking the Name of GOD in vain, when you your-

ſelves

ſelves are guilty of it, and have ſet them a bad Example. I wiſh that the frequent Practice of abuſing the Name of GOD, in Parents, and Maſters and Miſtreſſes, be not often the Occaſion of Children and Servants falling into the like; and often the Reaſon why thoſe Parents, Maſters and Miſtreſſes, will not, or dare not, reprove and puniſh their Children and Servants for ſo offending. And pray conſider, what an evil Paſs thoſe poor People are brought to, that dare not do their Duty to their Children and Servants, when yet they ſhall be puniſhed ſorely by GOD for not doing it. I wiſh they would think better on this Matter; and though they are exceeding faulty in this Point themſelves, yet they would ſtill reprove, and puniſh thoſe who are under their Care for the like Offences; they would do but their Duty, prevent a

great deal of Miſchief, and ſave the being guilty of other Peoples Sins.

BUT *to take the Name of God in vain*, is, moſt properly, to Swear, either *Raſhly*, without juſt and weighty Occaſion, without Heed and Reverence; or *Falſely*, without regard to Truth, and to what our Conſcience tells us; either without knowing what we ſay to be true, or knowing that what we ſay is not true.

Firſt, Of Swearing lightly or raſhly; the Commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain:* By which, it ſhould appear, that no Man can be ſaid to *Swear*, that does not uſe the very Name of *God*, in his Oath; this was an old Miſtake, and yet continues very common amongſt us, and therefore muſt needs be removed, before

I can go any further; for People have ſtill fancied, that if they do not mention the ſacred Name of GOD in their Aſſeverations, they are not to come under the Guilt of taking GOD's Name in vain, although they Swear by any Thing, or Creature elſe. Our Saviour ſays, *Matt.* xxiii. 16. to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* — *Wo to you, ye blind Guides, which ſay*—*Whoſoever ſhall Swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but whoſoever ſhall Swear by the Gold of the Temple, he is a Debtor, i. e.* he is obliged to perform his Oath—*Ye Fools and blind; for whether is greater, the Gold, or the Temple that ſanctifieth the Gold? And whoſoever ſhall Swear by the Altar, it is nothing, but whoſoever ſweareth by the Gift that is upon the Altar, he is guilty*—*i. e.* guilty if he perform not that Oath: *Ye Fools and blind; for whether is greater, the Gift, or the Altar*

Altar that ſanctifieth the Gift? Whoſo therefore (ſaith our Saviour, and which is the Solution of what I propoſe) *ſhall ſwear by the Altar, ſweareth by it, and by all Things thereon. And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the Temple, ſweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that ſwears by Heaven, ſweareth by the Throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon*—Add to this, what he ſaith in *Matt.* v. 34. *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all,* i. e. in your common Converſation, *— neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne—neither by the Earth, for it is his Footſtool—neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the great King—neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy Head, for thou canſt not make one Hair white or black.* Add, I ſay, this to what is before ſaid, and you will find, that the Relation every Thing and Creature in the World has to the great

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Creator of them all, is ſo cloſe and dependent, that it is aſſigned as the Cauſe, why he who ſweareth by the one, ſhould be concluded to Swear by the other. He who Swears by the Altar, Offering, or the Temple, Swears by Him to whom that Altar is erected, to whom that Offering is offered, and to whom that Temple, with its Service, is devoted——*i. e.* to GOD. He who Swears by Heaven, Swears by Him who governs therein; he who ſweareth by the Earth, Swears by Him whoſe Footſtool it is, and who made and preſerves it. He who Swears by *Jeruſalem*, Swears by Him whoſe City it was, *i. e.* by the great GOD. He who Swears by his Head, which is as it were the Fountain of Life, Swears by Him who made that Head, and in whoſe Hands alone is the Power of Life and Death. This is a Demonſtration (in its kind) that People may Swear, without

without uſing the Name of GOD; and conſequently may offend againſt this Commandment, without taking the Name of the LORD their GOD in vain, in the literal Senſe. And therefore, pray remember, that you ſatisfy not yourſelves with any ſuch idle Diſtinction; nor think you do not Swear, when you do not pronounce the ſacred Name of GOD, though you Swear by any Thing elſe.

I DO not ſay, however, that it is not better, to Swear by any Thing that does not immediately relate to GOD, than by his ſacred *Name*, his precious *Blood*, and meritorious *Wounds*, and Paſſion; becauſe it creates leſs Horror, gives leſs Offence, and is not of ſo bad Example: There is great Difference of Oaths; all are bad, but ſome are much worſe than others, and look as if they were more

more ſtudied, and deliberately wicked, and as if they came from Hell.

WHEN I have convinced you of this, that the Guilt of taking GOD's Name in vain, may be contracted by Swearing by any Thing elſe that has relation to GOD, though his Name be not directly uſed, then you will ſee, that you muſt no more Swear by any Thing elſe, than by the Name of GOD; and therefore that all ſorts of Oaths are comprehended under the Third Commandment, and concluded under theſe Words——*Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Which Words contain, as I ſaid, a Prohibition of all light and raſh Oaths, in our common Converſation, as well as all falſe Oaths, whether in private Company, or in publick Courts of Judicature, and before the Magiſtrate.

I will

I will only now ſpeak of all light and raſh Oaths, whether true or falſe, whether miſchievous or idle. For the Name of GOD is deſpiſed and profaned, by our uſing it upon light and frivolous Occaſions; though what we Swear be never ſo true; becauſe the Thing was not worthy of ſo much Weight, as an Oath does uſually add to what is ſaid. Now that no one is to Swear in light and trivial Matters, will appear to you very plainly, when you conſider what an Oath is.

AN Oath is a moſt religious Thing; 'tis an Acknowledgment of GOD's Omniſcience, and Omnipotence; we declare thereby, that we believe He knows the very Secrets of our Hearts, and that He can and will puniſh us, if what we affirm be not true, and

if

if we purpoſe not to perform what we then promiſe. An Oath, is the ſolemn calling upon GOD to bear witneſs, that what we utter with our Mouths is what we believe in our Hearts to be exactly true; and it is alſo the ſolemn Calling upon GOD to puniſh, and take Vengeance on us, if we do not ſeriouſly intend what we ſay and promiſe. The Heart of Man lies ſecret to all the World; you want to know whether I ſpeak the Truth; and whether I intend to do as I ſay I will do. My bare Word is not ſufficient in the Caſe, becauſe all Men are, or may be Liars; and though their Words may be with you, yet their Hearts may be far from you. How will you do then, to know whether I be a true Man, and ſpeak what I think? why then I take an Oath, I Swear by the ſacred Name of GOD, that what I

affirm

affirm with my Lips, is what my Heart believes to be true; by this I call GOD to witneſs that my Heart and Mouth agree, and that if they do not agree, then I am underſtood to deſire that GOD would take Vengeance on me, and puniſh my Impiety to *Him*, and Falſhood to *Man*. Can any Thing then be more ſerious and religious than a ſolemn Oath? Aſſure yourſelves that every time you take an Oath, let it be by what it will, that has relation to GOD, you do at that time call down the great GOD to witneſs to the Truth of what you ſay, and to avenge Himſelf on your Falſhood, if what you ſay be indeed falſe.

REMEMBER therefore, I deſire you, what a ſerious Thing an Oath is; and then think, whether it be fit to apply ſo ſerious a Thing to ſuch light

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and frivolous Occaſions as Men commonly Swear upon, though what they Swear to ſhould be true. Let this be the firſt Reaſon againſt Swearing lightly and fooliſhly, in trivial Things. 'Tis an awful Thing to call upon the great GOD of Heaven and Earth, the Maker and Preſerver of us all, upon whoſe Will alone we depend for every Moment of our Lives; to call Him to atteſt and witneſs to Matters of ſo ſmall and pitiful Concern, that you would be aſhamed to call even me, or any ſerious Neighbour, to be witneſs to. This ought not to be done, in Decency, though what you Swear to be never ſo true. An Oath is to make an end of Strife, and for Confirmation of Truth; but then this Truth is to be a Truth of Weight and great Importance; and this Strife is to be Matters worth the Striving for. Every

Oath

Oath that is allowed to be taken by GOD, is to be taken, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſays, chap. iv. 2. *in Truth, in Judgement, and in Righteouſneſs.* With the Heart, with the Underſtanding, and a good Conſcience; and to diſcover the Truth, that Judgement may be righteouſly adminiſtred, and Good may be done by it. The Name of GOD, is not to be ſworn by, where none of theſe good Ends are anſwered. I wiſh you could but remember all the Oaths you have heretofore ſworn, that you might examine and ſee, how few were ſworn in Truth, in Judgement, and in Righteouſneſs; how few tended to diſcover any Truth of Importance, that wanted to be diſcovered; how few of them contributed to the doing Juſtice to any one, or to the promoting Righteouſneſs. I am afraid you would find, that every Oath, beſides what

what you took before the Magiſtrate, was taken vainly, lightly, raſhly, preſumptuouſly, and wickedly; ſo far from doing any Good, that they are, every one of them, Matter of Shame, Humiliation and Repentance before GOD.

REMEMBER, ſecondly, that all theſe light, raſh, and preſumptuous Oaths, are not only unbecoming and unfit to be uttered, by reaſon of their unworthy Matter, but are moſt ſolemnly forbidden by GOD. 'Tis GOD himſelf, you ſee, that ſays to every one of us — *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.* — Would GOD himſelf deſcend from Heaven, with ſuch Solemnity, as you have ſeen, to forbid you the taking his Name in vain, if it were not a Matter of the greateſt Moment and Importance in the World

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to you, not to take that Name in vain? 'Tis for your ſake alone, for your Advantage, here and hereafter, that GOD inſtructs you in his Will, and tells you what you are to do, and what to leave undone, in order to his bleſſing, favouring you, and making you happy.

IF you ſhould ſpend every Day you live, in Oaths and Curſes, Execrations, Blaſphemies, and Profanations of GOD's holy Name and Word, you would not interrupt his Happineſs, or do Him any Harm at all: But becauſe it will hurt yourſelves, and bring you to everlaſting Deſtruction both of Body and Soul, not to do his Will, and to comply with his Injunctions and Commands; therefore,

REMEMBER,

REMEMBER, thirdly, That theſe Oaths will be avenged by GOD, ſome time or other. —— *The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, that taketh his Name in vain.* He who from Heaven forbids us, every one, to take his Name in vain, declares from Fire and Smoak, with Thunder, Lightning, Storm and Tempeſt, that *he will not hold us guiltleſs that take his Name in vain:* and if not guiltleſs, then to be ſure we ſhall be held guilty; guilty of the Violation and Breach of GOD's Law: and conſequently liable to ſuch Puniſhment, as is due to ſuch Offenders, and Offences. What particular Puniſhments they are obnoxious to, in this Life, is not declared; and therefore they are liable to all: There is not a Judgement, in all the Stores of

GOD's

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IF you ſhould ſpend every Day you live, in Oaths and Curſes, Execrations, Blaſphemies, and Profanations of GOD's holy Name and Word, you would not interrupt his Happineſs, or do Him any Harm at all: But becauſe it will hurt yourſelves, and bring you to everlaſting Deſtruction both of Body and Soul, not to do his Will, and to comply with his Injunctions and Commands; therefore,

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GOD's

GOD's Vengeance, but they have reaſon to apprehend and fear; their Sin is ſo provoking, and preſumptuous, and has ſo little Temptation to it. *Becauſe of Swearing the Land mourneth*, ſaith the Prophet *Jeremiah*, ch. xxiii. 10. *i. e.* the Land was afflicted with ſeveral Plagues and heavy Judgements, by reaſon of the frequency of Oaths and Perjuries among the People. And I dare ſay, that many a Man amongſt us, is afflicted, blaſted, and undone, by this audacious Contempt of GOD's Name and Profanation, who little thinks from whence the Curſe, and ſecret Canker comes: How ſhould it be otherwiſe? Can GOD be preſumed to bleſs, can He be intreated to bleſs thoſe People, who daily take his Name in vain, who defy his Laws, and curſe Him to his Face? who

who call for Vengeance on their own, and other Peoples Heads, almoſt every Word they ſay? Can they expect a Bleſſing, who hardly ever mention GOD, but in the Way of Blaſphemy? and make few other Prayers, than for Plagues and Miſchiefs, and Damnation, and eternal Wrath? How merciful is GOD, that He does not grant, what theſe poor People aſk Him, with ſuch Earneſtneſs!

BUT, be aſſured, that without ſincere Repentance, and Amendment of this Sin, however He forbear you in this World, He will moſt certainly, according to your Curſes and repeated Wiſhes, condemn you, and confound you, in the World to come. Thoſe Prayers that came from Hell, which pleaſed your Ears, and filled your Mouth ſo often, ſhall once be heard, and carry you to that accurſ-

ed Place of Pain and Sorrow, and to that Company of curſed Spirits, which you have called upon ſo often. Remember, that it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living GOD; who has declared *he will not hold him guiltleſs, that taketh his Name in vain.*

REMEMBER, fourthly, that as oft as you come to Church on theſe Occaſions, ſo oft you ſolemnly pray to GOD, that you may eſcape this great Guilt: No ſooner has the Miniſter proclaimed in the Name of GOD, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*; but the People, every one of them, is commanded to anſwer —— *Lord, have Mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep this Law.* And can you go from hence, and unbeſpeak this Prayer immediately, by falling again into

to

to that wicked Practice? Without the Grace of GOD, we can do nothing that is Good, nor eſcape the falling into any Evil: We therefore hear this Law of GOD pronounced, againſt taking his Name in vain, we hear the Tranſgreſſion of this Law ſeverely threatned, *He will not hold us guiltleſs* — we pray Him to have Mercy on us, to forgive us all our great and frequent Violations of this Law, that are paſt: and we intreat Him of his Mercy alſo, to incline our Hearts for the future to keep this Law; that He would fill them with ſuch an awful Reverence and Regard to his great Name, that we may never do it any Violence or Diſhonour, by Swearing idly, raſhly, or falſely; and there is all the Reaſon in the World, to pray this Prayer moſt ſeriouſly and earneſtly, becauſe it is decent, reaſonable,

and a Thing of ſuch Moment, as even our Lives and Souls depend upon it. Now put theſe Things together, that have already been laid down——That an Oath is a moſt ſacred, ſerious, ſolemn Act of Religion, intended by GOD for the Confirmation of Truth, the doing Juſtice and Judgement to all Men, and the putting an End to Strife——That it is a moſt unſeemly, unbecoming Thing, to apply ſuch ſerious and religious Affirmations, as Oaths are, to light trivial Words, and Matters of no Weight and Moment——That all ſuch Oaths are utterly forbidden by GOD's expreſs Command, uttered by his own Mouth; that the Breach of this Command will ſurely be avenged by Him, as ſure as GOD is true, who has ſaid it——And that we make it our conſtant Prayer, that we may not fall into this Sin, but may incline

incline with all our Hearts to keep this Law —— Put all theſe Things together, and ſee if light and common Swearing be a Thing that Men ſhould ſo cheaply and eaſily fall into; if it be not what we ought immediately to be humbled for, to be ſadly aſhamed of, to be moſt ſeriouſly repented of and left. Theſe are all Religious Conſiderations, and concern us, as People that pretend to believe in GOD, that acknowledge the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, and profeſs and call ourſelves Chriſtians.

THERE is no ſuch Thing as anſwering any of theſe Arguments: no body once pretends to juſtify their Practice of Swearing, either from Scripture, Reaſon, or Authority of wiſe and good Men: The Practice indeed runs againſt all, and is too much for all of them, in this World;

but no body ever yet defended it: Is it not ſtrange, that what is ſo impoſſible to be excuſed or juſtified, ſhould yet obtain ſo generally? that that which every one condemns, both in himſelf, and in all other People; ſhould yet be patiently ſuffered to prevail, and reign, as it were, without controll?

IF theſe religious Conſiderations will not prevail, that yet convince the Conſcience of every ſingle Man and Woman in the World——there is but little Hope that other Reaſons of leſs weight and moment ſhould do any great Service, to the diſcountenancing and abating of this wicked Practice. But yet it will become us to try all Ways and Means to do it.

ADD therefore, in the fifth Place, that the Laws of the Land take Cognizance

nizance of this Matter, and make it Penal *to take the Name of God in vain.* It is a ſort of Reproach to any Chriſtian People, to think, that when neither the Fear of offending GOD, and incurring his Diſpleaſure, and being puniſhed by Him, can reſtrain Men from Swearing, the Penalty of *Two Shillings* ſhould do it: that Men ſhould rather fear the paying a little Money, than fear the offending Him, who can caſt both Soul and Body into Hell-Fire. This, I ſay, is a ſort of ſhameful Conſideration; but we muſt take Things as we find them, and be very glad if the Fear of any Thing will keep Men in their Bounds, and preſerve them in any degree innocent. Remember therefore, that whoever Swears in common Converſation, is liable to the Forfeiture, if complained of; and that you lie at the Mer-

cy of every one that will inform againſt you. I wiſh this Law would take better Effect, than it has hitherto done; and that you would keep one another in Awe, by the Power it gives you, to put them to Expence and Shame, that are guilty of Swearing. The Name of an Informer, is, in ſome Caſes, odious, but in this Caſe it is not ſo; here a Man gets nothing by it, becauſe the Forfeiture goes to the Poor, which is ſo much Good to them who want it: and it is done for a good End, that GOD may not be diſhonoured, and that a ſinful Practice in our Neighbour may not be ſuffered to go on, to his great Miſchief. I ſhould not be aſhamed myſelf to turn Informer in this Caſe, if it ſhould ſo fall out. But I had rather much, that the Fear of GOD, and the Senſe of your Duty, ſhould reſtrain you from doing Evil,

Evil, than the Fear of ſuch Information, and ſuch Penalty. Make this uſe of the Law, however; conſider, whether it be worth the while, to pay down the Wages of a Day or two's Labour; by which your Family ſhould ſubſiſt, for the ſake of Swearing an Oath, — if there were really no other Miſchief to follow. Eſpecially when you remember, in the ſixth Place, that there is neither Pleaſure, nor Profit to be reaped from this ungodly Practice. They who are moſt addicted to Swearing, know not why they are ſo; they can give no Reaſon, why they fall continually into this abominable Sin; they freely acknowledge, that they neither propoſe, nor find any Pleaſure or Advantage in it. Other Sins, have one or both of theſe Temptations, to induce Men to fall; they either ſatisfy ſome ſenſual Appetite, or gra-

tify ſome covetous Deſire of Profit; at leaſt they hope to find their Account in it. But he who Swears thinks of neither: ſo that he truly gives away his Soul for nothing. Other Sinners ſell at leaſt, but this Man ſquanders it away for that which neither pleaſes him, nor does him any Service. Of all Offenders in the World, the common Swearer makes the worſt Bargain, gives himſelf up to everlaſting Pains and Sorrow, for that which no Body adviſed him to, no Body tempted him to, no Body approved when done; which he himſelf never liked whilſt doing, nor ever remembered when done, with any Satisfaction or Content. Let any one call to Mind the many Oaths, and Profanations of GOD's holy Name he has been guilty of, and ſee what he has gotten by them, whether he be the Richer, the Wiſer,

or

or more eſteemed, or any ways bettered by them. And will you keep a Practice ſtill, that never did, nor ever will, bring either Pleaſure or Advantage with it? *What ſhall it profit a Man*, indeed, *to gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* But is it not ſtill ſo much the worſe, to loſe his Soul, and gain nothing? The ſenſual Pleaſures of this Life; may bring one to eternal Pain; but yet it is fooliſher to endure thoſe Pains, for Sins that have no Pleaſure in them. In all Offences elſe, we conſider what Men aim at, and intend, what their End and Drift is; and what the Motives and Temptations to them are; and accordingly we excuſe them more or leſs: But in this, we ſee no End, no Temptation, and they themſelves ſay ſo; they are therefore Self-condemned, and condemned by every Body elſe.

What

What ſhall I ſay farther? It is a Practice that you hate and abhor, in all People, whom you love, as in your Wives and Children; and a Practice you cannot well endure in your Servants, and ſuch as are related to you. You would, I imagine, ſtand amazed, be angry and aſhamed, to hear your Wives and Children anſwer you with Oaths, Swear loudly upon all Occaſions, and mingle Blaſphemies and Curſes in their common Diſcourſes. They have the ſame Paſſions, the ſame Provocations to this Sin, with yourſelves; you are no more allowed by the Laws of GOD or Man, than they; it is only Cuſtom makes the Difference. Their Modeſty and Virtue has not yet broken through the Reſtraints of Religion and GOD's Laws, and I hope they never will: but if they ſhould, they have as much to ſay before GOD

as yourſelves; no Sex, Age, or Degree, can pretend to a Privilege of offending GOD. But I would gladly hope, 'tis Love to thoſe Relations, that would give you both Grief and Shame, to hear them fall into this wicked Practice, imagine therefore, ſince they love you alſo equally, that thoſe Relations are alike aſhamed and grieved, to ſee you fall ſo eaſily and frequently into that wicked Practice; and for their ſake, as well as for your own, forbear it. Think with yourſelf, that as you fell into this Sin, by Example, and hearing others Swear, by Habit, and by Cuſtom, ſo may your Wife and Children (without the Grace of GOD, and great Care) be brought, by your Example, and living daily in your Company, to the ſame ſhameful, wicked Cuſtom: And then, what a Heap of Sin, and Miſchief do you draw

draw upon your Head; by occaſioning thoſe to fall, whom, above all the World, you were obliged to keep upward? by drawing down GOD's Vengeance on their Heads, whoſe Innocence and Prayers might have prevailed with Him to ſpare you, and reſtore you to his Favour. 'Tis certain indeed, that neither Wife, nor Children, will be excuſed before GOD, for following the wicked Example of a Huſband and a Father; becauſe every Body is to live by Rule, and GOD's Law, and not by any one's Example: but 'tis as certain, that he ſhall be puniſhed by GOD, for giving ſuch an ill Example to Wife and Children, who are ſo apt and eaſy to follow it. I would not eaſily ſuppoſe, that Women frequently fall into this accurſed Cuſtom; but I ſay, if they do, the Men are very much to blame for it, by ſetting them ſo ill an Example,

ample, and giving them ſuch Countenance and Encouragement. And then, what a ſort of Hell is there in ſuch a Houſe, where every one deſpiſes GOD, and tramples under foot his Laws; and no Body is left to ſtand amazed, to reprove, to grieve, and to interceed with GOD for his Mercy, and Forbearance to that ſinful and loſt Family. Theſe are the propereſt Arguments that I could think on, to diſſuade you by, from light and raſh Swearing; they are ſuch as you have often heard, ſuch as your own Senſe and Reaſon may, and does ſuggeſt and furniſh you with, againſt your daily Practice: Your Condemnation will chiefly ariſe from hence, that you in your own Hearts and Conſciences, know all the Reaſons and Arguments againſt Swearing, and not one for it, as well as the greateſt Scholars in the World;

and

and therefore want not to be inſtructed in your Duty by us, but to be remembred and put in mind of what you knew before.

LET me therefore make an End, at this Time, with reminding you of ſome few Things, and laying ſome few Injunctions on you. Let every one, that has been guilty of this dangerous and wicked Practice, repent ſincerely of it, aſk GOD Forgiveneſs with his whole Heart, and beg the Aſſiſtance of his Grace, to keep him, and prevent his falling again into it. And let him alſo uſe his beſt Endeavours himſelf to avoid all manner of Occaſions, that hitherto have led him into it. Let him carefully watch over himſelf, that he ſpeak not haſtily and unadviſedly with his Lips. Remember GOD is in the Company, and hears you every Word you ſay. Give not way to Anger, upon every little

little Accident that croſſes your Deſign; this is the Parent of many Oaths; the leaſt Thing that is out of the Way, and does not do as you would have it, the leaſt Oppoſition of your Judgement, the leaſt Contradiction to your Will, provokes you to call on GOD, to Curſe, and to Blaſpheme his Name; as if that would any way mend the Matter, or make Things go the better. You muſt, if given to Swearing, above all Things, avoid Drinking and Gaming; if the Fear of GOD depart from you, when you are Sober, Serious, and have your Senſes about you, and you can hardly then forbear Swearing; how ſhould you do it, when you have loſt that Reaſon, and are little leſs than Mad? Even they who abhor an Oath when ſober, do yet outrageouſly Swear when they are overcome with Drink; you muſt therefore,

therefore by all Means avoid Exceſs, that does ſo naturally and eaſily provoke to Paſſion. And as to Gaming, there are few People in the World that follow it, but Swear exceſſively; there are few that loſe their Money, but loſe their Patience and their Temper with it; and the little croſs Accidents that commonly happen, overthrow all Reaſon, and leave the Man to the Rage of his wild Paſſions, and then you know what follows. Gaming is one of the moſt deſtructive Vices Men can fall into, and provokes to the greateſt Anger. It undoes moſt People at long-run; and 'tis much worſe in mean and poor People, than in the Rich, becauſe it waſtes their Time exceſſively, which poor People can very ill ſpare, from the Care and Labours that are to ſupport themſelves and poor Families; and it waſtes their ſmall

ſmall Subſtance, that ſhould furniſh their Wives and Children with Bread, and other Neceſſaries of Life. But that which I intend againſt it now, is, that it occaſions Oaths and Curſes, Blaſphemies and dreadful Execrations, in a moſt fearful Manner; and therefore, whoever would avoid Swearing, and taking the Name of GOD in vain, muſt be ſure to avoid Gaming, though it be for little Matters. Avoid alſo all ſuch Company, as are likelieſt to miniſter Occaſion to Anger and Oppoſition. Some People are of ſo perverſe and thwarting a Temper, that a Man had need of Patience to converſe quietly with them; they that are apt to be provoked, muſt ſhun this Company. And when you have taken this Care of yourſelf, to prevent your falling into this wicked Practice — go on to promote the Glory of GOD, by doing Good to

others

others —— if your Neighbours are apt to Swear, tell them, calmly, they diſtruſt you too much, and that you would believe them without an Oath, they have ſuch Credit with you. When once they find you deal thus Chriſtianly and Friendly with them, they will be more upon their guard, in your Company; and ſo you will be inſtrumental to their Good; and make ſome Amends for your own Miſcarriages. But for thoſe who are more immediately under your Care, and depend upon you, there you may be more free, and there it is your Duty to reprove, and puniſh ſuch as you find guilty this Way of diſhonouring GOD. Let not any of your Children dare to Swear, without your Anger and immediate Chaſtiſement. You will ſave them hereby, from much Miſchief here, and from GOD's Anger hereafter. Keep not a

Servant

Servant under your Roof, that is guilty of this wicked Practice, their Labours will not be bleſſed by GOD to you. Employ no Workmen that will not do their Buſineſs without Swearing. Relieve no Poor that are guilty of thus diſhonouring GOD. You would, in a little Time, ſee a great Change and Reformation of Manners, if you would take theſe Courſes: They ought to want even Neceſſaries, that will not work for them, and enjoy them with the Favour of GOD! They would in a little Time, be very thankful to you, and bleſs GOD for you, that by theſe Means reclaimed them from thoſe curſed Habits. This was heretofore the Sin of the Rich, the Eaſy, and the Thoughtleſs great Men of the World; but now, the poorer People are the Wickeder, and more provoking GOD; they will not let the

the Rich and Great have any Sins peculiar to them, but will come in for their ſhare, though it be but a ſhare of Damnation.

Is it not a ſtrange and amazing Thing, to hear poor People Swearing at the Plow, and at their daily Labour, Swearing at their Horſes, Cattle, and any Thing that comes in their Way! People that depend on the Bleſſing of GOD for their daily Bread, are daily provoking Him, to blaſt and confound them! Ought not theſe People to be taught by Puniſhments, and all ſort of Penalties and Rigours, to be more ſenſible of their Duty; and to pay more Honour to their conſtant heavenly Benefactor? Shall it be cheaper ſtill to defy their Maker, and deſpiſe their good Redeemer, than to ſpeak a diſreſpectful Word of their Superiors, Parents,

Parents, or their Maſters? Compaſſion to the Poor would make one partial in their Favour, and much more tender of afflicting them, than others; but this is true Compaſſion, to afflict them for a while, that they may learn not to blaſpheme, and be ſaved in the Day of the LORD JESUS. Let no Man therefore be tenderer of them, than of GOD's Honour, nor, by ſparing their Bodies, hurt their Souls. If they will venture to offend GOD, let them be ſure to provoke the Juſtice and Indignation of Men, and pay whatever Penalty the Law inflicts; that if they will not obey for Conſcience-ſake, they may for Wrath, that the Name of GOD be not blaſphemed.

BUT let me rather end, with hoping, deſiring, and with praying, that the Senſe of GOD's Honour,

the Senſe of his Command, the Senſe of their Duty, and their great Danger, may influence them to Conſideration, Repentance, and Amendment, more than the Fear of Man; and that, by all, or any Means, they may be evermore reſtrained from taking the Name of the LORD their GOD in vain; and may for evermore remember, *that He will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain.*

F I N I S.